



Harmony Valley Farm

An update for our Community Supported Agriculture Members - Since 1993

www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com

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Changes in the marketplace: Where do we fit?

By Farmer Richard

Many of you will have heard by now that Amazon has bid \$13.7 billion to buy Whole Foods Market (WFM). Within the industry and news in general, this deal has put quite the focus on the future of food buying and many are speculating about how this will change the face of grocery retail, specifically related to perishables. Only time will tell just what is in store for consumers and producers like us. Some of you may be wondering why we are even writing about this business deal? Well, Harmony Valley Farm has been growing produce for WFM stores in the Midwest region for over 25 years. We have a long and mutually beneficial relationship with them, so we are concerned about the impact this buy out will have on our farm.

WFM purchases large quantities of selected vegetables we agree to grow for them based on pre-season commitments and negotiated pricing. They have had remarkable follow through and they stay true to their commitments throughout the season. They are reliable, consistent, and they pick-up at our farm twice per week. The trucks that deliver product from the distribution center outside of Chicago to their stores in the Twin Cities are mostly empty on their return trip, so they stop and pick up produce at our farm and other regional farms as a back haul. Their consistent volume purchases have allowed us to obtain efficiencies of production we do not have with small volume orders. If we have a large amount of a crop available in excess of commitments and we need help finding a home for it, they have stepped up to the plate and helped us out so product doesn't go to waste. Our CSA members *do* benefit, unknowingly, from these efficiencies. For example...

*(See our **blog** for the rest of this very important op-ed from Farmer Richard)*

What's In The Box?

PURPLE OR GREEN SCALLIONS: We're happy the green tops have remained in good condition, so nearly the entire onion may be used! We're almost done with scallions for the season and will be moving into the next variety soon.

SALAD MIX: This is our last week of salad mix until we resume plantings again in the fall.

BABY ARUGULA OR BABY KALE MIX: Arugula is a peppery green that may taste pungent if you eat some on its own. Pairing it with other ingredients helps bring the flavor into balance making it a nice base for fresh salads, use it as a garnish for flat bread and pizza, or you could even make pesto out of it.

FENNEL: Refer to this week's vegetable feature for more information about fennel!

FRESH ITALIAN GARLIC: The outer layers of skin around the bulb are still fresh, so you may have to work a little harder in comparison to dry garlic to peel it. The cloves of garlic will be juicy with a mild, fresh garlic flavor.

RAINBOW CHARD: This cooking green is related to beet greens and the two may be used interchangeably. While it is most often cooked, you can eat chard raw in salads.

PURPLE & GREEN KOHLRABI: Refer to last week's blog and newsletter where we featured kohlrabi and provided several delicious recipes.

GREEN TOP MIXED COLORED BEETS: Your bunch this week may contain red, golden or Chioggia (candy-striped) beets...or all three colors in one! If you roast them, they'll retain their color better than if they are boiled. Don't forget to eat the tops too!

SUGAR SNAP PEAS: This week's peas are a different variety. They are still a sweet pea with an edible pod, but the flavor is a little different than last week's. The strings on this variety are sometimes more tough, so take the time to remove it before eating the peas.

Cooking with This Week's Box!

Despite the fact that summer made its official entrance last week, it has been a bit on the chilly side! I thought we'd get hit with a wave of cucumbers and zucchini for this week's box, but these crops need heat to produce and it just hasn't been warm enough. So, we'll set aside all the cucumber recipes I've been looking forward to and we'll focus on some other delicious recipes this week!

This is our last week for salad mix until we resume planting in the fall. With the pretty little beets in your box this week, I think a beet salad is in order. Here's a recipe for a **Beet Salad with Goat Cheese and Candied Walnuts**. The bunches of beets this week include a variety of colors. If you'd like to keep the color in each variety, cook them separately or roast them. If you cook the golden and Chioggia beets with the red ones, they'll all turn red. This is a great salad to serve alongside the **Pizza with Spring Onions and Fennel** recipe featured in this week's newsletter. You could even chop up some of the fennel fronds and add it to the salad if you like. Otherwise, save the fronds to make **Blended Lemonade with Ginger and Fennel!**

Make sure you save the greens from your beets! Beet greens are packed with nutrition and can be added to a green smoothie in the morning, lightly sautéed or eaten raw. Beets and Swiss chard are in the same family and you can actually use these two greens interchangeably. If you combine the beet greens and the bunch of Swiss chard in this week's box, you can make this **Chard Gratin** recipe featured at *Food52*...

*(See our **blog** for the rest of this article & our suggestions for utilizing every item in your box!)*

Featured Vegetable: Fennel

Fennel is a unique vegetable easily identified by its feathery tops and distinct aroma. It has the flavor of anise, or mild licorice, which some people love and others are still learning to like. If you are in the latter group, please keep an open mind and read on. Nearly all of the fennel plant is edible and is comprised of three main parts. The white bulb at the base of the plant is the most commonly used part. The soft, fine, feathery green portion extending off the stalks is called "fronds." The fronds are also edible and can be used more as an herb, seasoning or garnish to add a bit of flavor to soups, salads, etc. The stalks are sometimes too fibrous to eat, however they have a lot of flavor and can be used to make vegetable stock or a soothing tea.

Fennel has a wide variety of uses and may be found in recipes from a variety of culinary backgrounds. It's often used in Italian cuisine, can be found in classical French food, but also finds its way into cuisine from different parts of Asia. I recently came across a recipe for **Indian Spiced Fennel Pickles** that I'm anxious to try. Fennel may be used in gratins, cream soups, seafood dishes, simple salads and antipasto platters. It pairs well with a whole host of other foods including lemons, oranges, apples, honey, white wine, olives, olive oil, beets, carrots, celery, tomatoes, potatoes, fish, seafood, pork, cured meats, white beans, cream, parmesan cheese, feta cheese, cucumbers, dill and parsley...

(Visit our **blog** for the remainder of this article)

Pizza with Spring Onions and Fennel

Yield: one 12 to 14 inch pizza

- 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 cup chopped onion (scallions or sweet onions)
- 1 ¼ pounds trimmed fennel bulbs (2-3 ea), cored & chopped
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 2 Tbsp minced fennel fronds
- Parmesan
- Salt & freshly ground black pepper to taste
- ½ recipe whole wheat pizza dough*



1. Preheat the oven to 450°F, preferably with a baking stone in it. Heat 1 tablespoon of the olive oil over medium heat in a large, heavy skillet, and add the onion and about ½ tsp salt. Cook, stirring often, until the onion is tender, about five minutes. Add the fennel and garlic, and stir together. Cook, stirring often, until the fennel begins to soften, about five minutes. Turn the heat to low, cover and cook gently, stirring often, until the fennel is very tender and sweet and just beginning to color, about 15 minutes. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Stir in the chopped fennel fronds, and remove from the heat.
2. Roll or press out the pizza dough and line a 12 to 14 inch pan. Brush the pizza crust with the remaining tablespoon of olive oil and sprinkle on the Parmesan. Spread the fennel mixture over the crust in an even layer. Place on top of the pizza stone, and bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until the edges of the crust are brown and the topping is beginning to brown. Remove from the heat. Serve hot, warm or room temperature.

* This recipe was created by Martha Rose Shulman and was borrowed from cooking.nytimes.com. The whole wheat pizza dough recipe referenced above may be found at cooking.nytimes.com. It's part of another pizza recipe by Martha Rose Shulman. Search for "Pizza with Green Garlic, Potato and Herbs" and you'll find the dough recipe.

Pasta with Roasted Fennel Tomato Sauce

Yield: 4 servings

- 2 fennel bulbs, cored and sliced thinly
- 2 large onions, peeled and sliced
- 8 garlic cloves, roughly chopped
- ⅓ cup olive oil
- ½ tsp chili flakes
- 2 Tbsp whole fennel seeds
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 can (14 oz) whole tomatoes, crushed by hand
- ½ cups shredded Parmesan
- 1 pound short pasta



1. Preheat the oven to 450°F. Combine the fennel, onion, garlic, oil, chili flakes, fennel seeds, salt, and pepper in a roasting dish and roast for 15 minutes, tossing once or twice during cooking.
2. In the meantime, bring a pot of salty water to boil and cook the pasta until al dente. Reserve some pasta cooking water.
3. After 15 minutes of roasting, stir in the crushed tomatoes, combining well. Roast 5 to 10 minutes more, until the fennel is tender and starting to brown.
4. Drain the pasta and toss with the roasted vegetables and Parmesan, adding some pasta cooking water if necessary until the sauce is loosened and coats the pasta. Serve immediately.

This recipe was featured at seriouseats.com